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> December 2024



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Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia

People not working, or working less than they prefer, including whether they want to work, are looking for work, and factors for them to start working

Reference period December 2024

Released 8/05/2025

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Key statistics

In December quarter 2024:

- 1.1 million people (aged 18-75) without a (paid) job wanted a job, with 1 million available to start within 4 weeks.
- The most common reason men who wanted a job were unavailable to start within 4 weeks was 'Long-term health condition or disability'. The most common reason women who wanted a job were unavailable to start within 4 weeks was 'Caring for children'.
- 2.1 million people without a job did not want a job, with a further 1.8 million either retired or permanently unable to work.
- The main reason for not wanting a job was 'No need, satisfied with current arrangements' (45%).

This release is published on a quarterly basis, with quarterly data published for the September, December and March quarters, and a combined June quarter and annual financial year release.

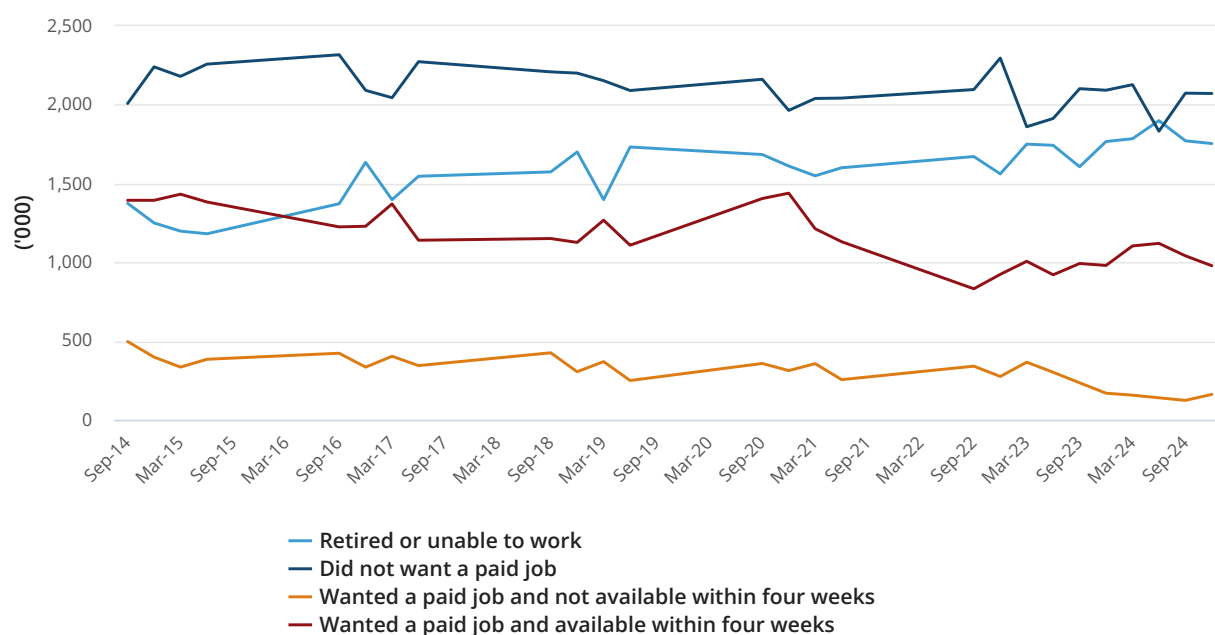
People who did not have a job

In December quarter 2024, there were 19 million people aged 18-75 years. Of these:

- 13.9 million were employed or had a job to start or return to (74%)
- 1.8 million were retired or permanently unable to work (9%)
- 3.2 million did not have a (paid) job (17%) - 1.1 million people wanted a (paid) job (35%) and 2.1 million people did not want a (paid) job (65%).

Of the 1.1 million people who wanted a job, 1 million (86%) were available within 4 weeks and 161,500 (14%) were not available within 4 weeks.

Graph 1 - People who did not have a job (aged 18-75)



Note: The survey was conducted every second year prior to 2022-23.

In December quarter 2024, of those aged 18-75 years who did not have a job, were not retired and not permanently unable to work:

- 1.9 million had a long-term health condition, and of these, 613,100 (32%) wanted a paid job.
- 1.2 million had a disability, with 410,100 of these people wanting a paid job (34%).

Note that people can report having both a long-term health condition and a disability.

People who did not want to work

Of the 2.1 million people aged 18-75 years who did not want a job in December 2024, the main reason for not wanting a job was 'No need, satisfied with current arrangements' (37%). For both men and women aged 18-24 years, 'Studying or returning to studies' was the main reason for not wanting a job (50% for men and 62% for women).

For women aged 25-39 years, 'Caring for children' (70%) was the main reason for not wanting a job, up from 50% in September 2024.

For women aged 40-54 years, the main reason was also 'Caring for children' (32%). For men aged 40-54 years, the main reason for not wanting a job was 'Long-term health condition or disability' (34%).

People who were not available to work

The main reasons women who wanted a job were not available within 4 weeks were:

- Caring for children (47%)
- Long-term health condition or disability (26%).

The main reason men who wanted a job were not available within 4 weeks was:

- Long-term health condition or disability (38%).

Incentives to work

Of the 3.2 million people who did not have a job in December quarter 2024, the most important factor associated with either returning to or commencing work was 'Finding a job that matches skills and experience', which was rated as 'Very important' by 33% of people.

For people with a long-term health condition, the most important factors were 'Finding a job that matches skills and experience' (28%) and 'Ability to work part-time hours' (24%).

For people with a disability, the most important factor was 'Support for training or study to improve skills' (26%).

Data downloads

Quarterly time series

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Table Q1. Participation status

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Table Q2. Whether wanted a job or more hours

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Table Q3. Unavailable workers and job seekers

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Table Q4. Reasons not looking for work or more hours

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Table Q5. Difficulties finding work or more hours

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Table Q6. Reasons for not wanting to work or more hours

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Previous catalogue number

This release previously used catalogue number 6239.0.

Methodology

[Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia methodology, December 2024](#)